

Standards for Reconstruction & Guidelines for Reconstructing Cultural Landscapes

When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, Restoration may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for Restoration developed.

Standards for Reconstruction

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.

2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.

4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. a reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.

5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.

6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Introduction

Whereas the treatment **Restoration** provides guidance on restoring—or re-creating—cultural landscape features, the **Standards for Reconstruction and Guidelines for Reconstructing Cultural Landscapes** address those aspects of treatment necessary to re-create an entire non-surviving landscape with new material. Much like restoration, the goal is to make the landscape appear as it did at a particular—and most significant—time in history. The difference is that in **Reconstruction**, there is far less (if any) extant historic material prior to treatment and, in some cases, there may be nothing visible. Because of the potential for historical error in the absence of sound physical evidence, this treatment can be justified only rarely and, thus, is the least frequently undertaken treatment.

For this reason, the various steps to be undertaken in **Reconstruction**—from research to new construction—are outlined, without providing the in-depth information offered for the other three treatments. Similarly, because few total landscape



None of the character-defining features of the South Terrace Garden at Monticello, in Charlottesville, Virginia, survived. Field archaeology (taking over a decade) combined with documentary resources has resulted in the reconstruction of the garden's bedding areas, [above] stone retaining wall and pavilion, [top right] as well as the orchard, vineyard and berry squires on the adjacent sloping lands. The work was executed with a high level of accuracy. (Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and author, 1996)

reconstructions meet the Standards, illustrations are also limited.

Documentation requirements prior to and following work are very stringent. Measures should be taken to preserve extant historic surface and subsurface material. Finally, the reconstructed landscape must be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.

■ Research and Document Historical Significance

Guidance for the treatment **Reconstruction** begins with **researching and documenting** the landscape's historical significance to ascertain that its re-creation is essential to the public understanding of the property. Often, another extant historic landscape on, or near the property, can adequately explain the property, together with other interpretive aids. Justifying a reconstruction requires detailed physical and documentary evidence to minimize or eliminate conjecture and ensure that the reconstruction is as accurate as possible. Only one period of significance is generally identified; a landscape, as evolved, is rarely re-created. During this important fact-finding stage, if research does not provide adequate documentation for an accurate reconstruction, other interpretive methods should be considered, such as an explanatory marker.

■ Investigate Archeological Resources

Investigating archeological resources is the next area of guidance in the treatment **Reconstruction**. The goal of physical research is to identify spatial organization and land patterns, features, and materials of the landscape which are essential to an accurate reconstruction, while leaving those archeological resources that are not essential undisturbed. Resources that are not relevant to the project should be preserved in place for future research. The archaeological findings and archival materials are then used to document the reconstruction period.

■ Identify, Protect and Preserve Extant Historic Features

Closely aligned with archeological research, recommendations are given for **identifying, protecting, and preserving** extant features of the cultural landscape. It is never appropriate to base a **Reconstruction** upon conjectural plans or designs, or the availability of different features from other landscapes. Thus, any remaining historic features and materials, such as remnants of a foundation, walkway or pond, should be

retained, when practical, and incorporated into the reconstruction. The historic as well as new material should be carefully documented to guide future research and treatment. Such documentation could include photographs, measured drawings, and work specifications.

■ Reconstruct Non-Surviving Landscapes

After the research and documentation phases, guidance is given for **Reconstruction** work itself. Features are addressed in general, always emphasizing the need for an accurate *depiction*; for example, exact duplication of field patterns or installation of a perennial border with exact arrangement and same genus, species and cultivar plants. In the absence of extant historic materials, the objective in reconstruction is to re-create the appearance of the historic landscape for interpretive purposes. Thus, while the use of traditional materials and finishes is always preferred, in some, instances, substitute materials may be used if they convey the same visual appearance.

Where non-visible features of the landscape are concerned--such as structural or mechanical systems--it is expected that contemporary materials and technology will be employed.

■ Interpret the Reconstructed Landscape

An integral component of **Reconstruction** is to make clear to the visiting public that the landscape is not authentic; rather, it is a portrayal of the past for interpretive purposes. Thus, the Standards for **Reconstruction** make clear that the need to identify the treatment through signs, markers or other interpretive tools. Often, a brochure explaining a landscape's history will note its disappearance over time and subsequent reconstruction--and interpreters also offer background so that visitors can understand what they are viewing.

■ Accessibility Considerations/Health and Safety Considerations/Environmental Considerations and Energy Efficiency

Code requirements must also be met in **Reconstruction** projects. For code purposes, a reconstructed landscape may be considered as essentially new construction. Guidance for these sections is also abbreviated, and focuses on achieving design solutions that do not destroy extant historic features and materials or obscure reconstructed features.